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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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LIBRARY SCIENCE
LIBRARY

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THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

Edited by A. C. Jones, Hornsey Public Libraries.

VOL. 48. No. 6

JUNE, 1955

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

by J. S. BRISTOW, F.L.A.

Mr. Bristow's Diamond Jubilee Year address first reviewed the history of the A.A.L., and then went on to consider the problem of the future. It is unfortunately impossible to print the address here in its entirety, and rather than try to produce a potted version giving the gist of the whole we have elected to present, with but one or two minor omissions, the whole of the second part, which contains some of the most stimulating suggestions which have yet been put forward for the possible future policy of this Association and its relations with the L.A.

Although it was the President's privilege to "talk without being answered back" at the Annual General Meeting, he shares our hope that publication of this part of his paper will provoke further discussion of these matters in the pages of the "Assistant Librarian."

IT IS THE TIDY, methodical, classifying mind that sees in the present arrangement of Branches and Sections cross-classification, and wishes to dissolve the A.A.L. Perhaps from this viewpoint the A.A.L. is a nuisance. Financially we cost the L.A. about £2,000 per annum at present. Would not our 6,000 members join other sections and so increase their capitation payments by the same amount? What if we are to be replaced by a Municipal Libraries Section?

The greatest achievement of the A.A.L. has been to realise what the membership and profession need and to fulfil that need. The L.A., learning from the experience of the A.A.L. has now copied, and by duplicating the A.A.L. activities claims that there is now no need for us—that we are superfluous. *Your Association is in danger!* The Hutchings 5th-column attack in Yorkshire is an effort to break the divisions one by one. The A.A.L. has proved its solidarity from time to time, as I have already displayed by the results of the various elections.

During the last year Mr. Hutchings explained to the Yorkshire Division how the A.A.L. had fulfilled its purpose, and that, because the L.A. had learned the lessons the A.A.L. had given it, there was no longer any need for a tutor. The correspondence courses, he claims, could be run equally well by the L.A., as they were from 1904 to 1929. I agree, they possibly could, but would they be run for the same fees? Present opinion, however, is against the L.A. both teaching and examining, no doubt because the L.A. rightly wish to resist the claims of the Schools of Librarianship to conduct their own examination. The L.A. realises the danger of allowing differential values of the Registration Examination to develop.

The publishing that the A.A.L. does could also be done by the

L.A., he says, but an examination of the Publications Accounts of the L.A. compared with the Publications Accounts of the A.A.L. gives ample reason why they could not be managed equally well by the L.A.

We are accused of having no other function than that of reacting point by point to the actions of the L.A. It is asserted that this is our only policy, and that we cannot find any other policy under present conditions. We are living on past glories, and instead of being a forum for youngsters in the profession, the A.A.L. is a forum for those rising and over 40—an old guard, living in the past. I apologise for being an example of what he means, but the war took up six of my years on non-professional work, and that excuse applies equally well to my contemporaries. I think it not unreasonable for your President in normal times to have reached 30 by the time he wears this decorative badge.

Mr. Hutchings concluded his paper by saying that he had diagnosed the causes of death and had put forward, in fact, a prophetic post mortem. It reminded me of the centenarian who was advised by his doctor when 60 that he had only 3 months to live! As an Association we are 60 years old—we, too, may have a centenary.

The Yorkshire Division are perturbed by this attack. They are inclined to agree that the L.A. Branch is duplicating almost all the activities of the A.A.L., and that assistants are quite happy to attend the Branch Meetings, when they have the temerity to attack even their own chiefs. I can sympathise with the Yorkshire Division, as I had a similar experience in the Wessex Division in 1950. In the South-West there was keen activity in all three very live divisions—Devon and Cornwall, Bristol and District and Wessex, although the activities were crippled to a certain extent by lack of funds. The L.A. were anxious to have a branch covering this area, and they encouraged its formation. The A.A.L. could see no reason for the duplication of its work, but agreed to co-operate with the branch which was formed. The unfair part of this competition, if you like to call it such, between the divisions and the branch, is that the branch had at least three times the total funds of the three divisions, and I think I am right in saying that the branch hardly knew what to do with its capital.

The fault lies not in ourselves, but in the L.A., who have modelled their branch meetings on those of the divisions. To say that the A.A.L. is now redundant because the L.A. duplicates A.A.L. activities is like the 'bus company saying that the railway is redundant! *The A.A.L. can only be redundant when everything it does is done better and more economically by the L.A.*

George Roebuck, Honorary Secretary in 1906, said: "L.A.A. is an association of young men, run by young men for young men." Is it because the A.A.L. is no longer run by young men that it is in danger, that it is no longer in favour?

One way of deposing or persuading the older A.A.L. "statesmen" to leave your association to the young men, would be to offer the most outstanding ones seats on the L.A. Council and substantiate the offer by support in the elections.

I have said it in Council and I now say it publicly, that if the A.A.L. wishes it could nominate members for the 9 London, 15 County and 12 Branch Councillors, and having done that, it *could* be sure of securing their election. The A.A.L., by organisation, could secure at least 38 seats out of the Council of 60.

Are you so apathetic that you don't want to do this? Have you so few candidates, or are you too independent, resenting the suggestion

that you should vote thus and thus at a secret ballot? Are so few of you lacking in ambition to serve your colleagues and the profession? Perhaps you are all too busy becoming Chartered Librarians.

What does please me is that contentious matters on the Agenda of an L.A. A.G.M. rouse you once in a while to attend in numbers sufficient to get support from the Chief Librarians who still retain a warm regard for the A.A.L. and all it has done and still realise its value to the profession. On these occasions you show your strength.

Remember, the A.A.L. has 65 per cent. of the L.A. personal membership.

The infiltration process, or taking over of the A.A.L. activities by the L.A., you may feel is a good thing, and that we assistants have achieved the end for which we strove. In which case you may feel that the A.A.L. can lose its personality into the L.A.

If you feel this way and allow the A.A.L. to disappear as a section, you can be assured that you would have to organise yourselves well once again if you needed to become a fighting force—you would be back to 1895 once again.

I might mention here that a Scottish member of the L.A. said to me very recently that in Scotland the younger generation did not have a say in professional matters at all!

As things are at present it does not require much mobilisation then to resist any motions at the L.A. A.G.M., or to make proposals and have sufficient strength to ensure that the A.G.M. instructions are carried out. The present L.A. Council realise, I think, that at any time the tail could wag the dog—at present the tail limits its activities to pushing the dog along—usually, I hope, in the way it should go. As long as the A.A.L. action ceases there, as long as we do not over-reach ourselves, I think the L.A. are content on the surface to leave things as they are.

The point, however, is, are we content to let things follow this pattern and risk eventual dissolution through lack of interest and fighting spirit in the future? Remember, the profession is fast becoming feminised. We have only a small percentage of ladies on the Council. Is this only a slow development on the part of the fairer sex? In the future there will be fewer men in the profession and this is a challenge, I repeat, to all female members. Will they take a more active interest in library politics than they do at present?

I would now like to make some proposals for the future—criticising the L.A. constructively, I hope, as a counterblast to the destructive criticism the A.A.L. has received.

The L.A. is composed of authority and personal members. What does the L.A. do for its authority members, apart from giving them statistics which will cause them to spend more, or more wisely. It arranges Conferences which allow the Chief Librarians and their Committee Chairmen to have a holiday together. Many Committee Chairmen regard the meetings as a bore—some more conscientious ones regard the whole business as a waste of public money and time, but agree to sending delegates because they are reluctant to deprive the Chief Librarian of the opportunity of meeting his colleagues. As conferences most of them are failures, if I am to judge from the comments I hear. To my knowledge in recent years no resolutions have ever been made for action to be taken. This is possibly because, as a working conference, the attendance is too large. The Conference should be of more interest and appeal to the Authority members, most of whom should be

willing and able to take an active part in the proceedings. The G.L.D.'s draft policy (now some months old) for the Library Association, Section 1(e), says, "The Annual Conference requires better planning and management to allow of more informed discussion followed by recommendations for action. Regional Conferences could achieve greater success, especially if the same topics were chosen by each Region. One of the A.A.L. activities which the L.A. has not yet successfully copied, is the Weekend Conference, when a set theme is chosen and the delegates are arranged in working parties or syndicates.

There is no lengthy paper read by a speaker, followed by a few comments by the same hardy annual vocalists. Instead, syndicate leaders lead the discussion along certain lines and everyone is encouraged to make a contribution. The A.A.L. Conference aims to reach some definite conclusions. e.g. the Tighe Report was a result of the Manchester Conference and the May *Assistant Librarian* reported concrete proposals for action only three weeks after the Week-end Conference was held in Birmingham.

I mentioned earlier a mistake which I thought the L.A. had made in 1930, in declaring that only members of the Library Association could sit the L.A. examinations. At the Greater London Division Annual General Meeting earlier this year, I asked a provocative question. Why did special librarians join the Library Association? Miss Jepson of the War Office Library, kindly gave me an answer. It was that she wanted to sit the L.A. examinations—not that she felt the uniting of all persons interested in libraries was a good thing, although she may also agree to this, but she would resent not being able to join the L.A.—she wanted to be a Chartered Librarian. Why should she have to join the L.A. to sit their examinations?

All this goes back to the fact that the L.A. needed members in 1930 to gain the Carnegie Grant.

It is said that money is the root of all evil. Admittedly the L.A. was in a sorry financial state in 1930, but the same cannot be said to-day. Chaucer House is now paid for, and last year's statement of assets looks healthy. 1954 saw the balance on income over expenditure with our increased membership fees, and £3,000 have been invested as a result. I wonder now if the L.A. could exist satisfactorily without the membership of those of us who are not yet Chartered Librarians.

I would like to see the L.A. willing to examine for an economic fee anybody who was willing to present himself for the examination with that fee. So long as the L.A. has conscription of membership of all those persons who wish to be in the library profession, there are bound to be disagreements and lengthy discussions. The L.A., I venture to suggest, no longer needs a membership of upwards of ten thousand. I think that the assistant has now contributed what he was originally needed for, that is, the capital to encourage the Carnegie U.K. Trust to give at the time money towards this building of which we can well be proud. Surely now is the time for the L.A. to revert to its dignified position and to welcome to its membership only people to whom it is willing to grant Associateship or Fellowship, and Institutional memberships . . .

If, then, the L.A. can become independent without the A.A.L., what can the A.A.L. do on its own?

It can do exclusively all those things which it has done so well before the advent of the Branches. The Divisions would once again on their own organise meetings in their particular areas, but with this difference:—

At present the A.A.L. is run efficiently on 6s. a member. The Divisions find, however, that they could do much more if they had less worry over money. With a subscription of 10s. for those under 21 and £1 for those over 21, it is unlikely that the A.A.L. would have financial worries.

How much longer the A.A.L. can manage on 6s. a member remains to be seen. The Council have recently decided that the L.A. will not be embarrassed by a request for an increase on capitation.

This year will see the end of the connection of the Martins with the Correspondence Courses—this is a sad thing, but Sam Martin was Hon. Education Secretary in 1931, and Mrs. Martin carried on the work alone from 1942 through the war years, and again since Mr. Martin's elevation to the rank of Chief Librarian. It has been realised that the Martins are irreplaceable and that we must now reorganise the work of the Honorary Education Secretary on a financial basis, and we must also find accommodation for the standard courses, stationery, etc.

The ambitious publishing programme begun since the war by John Bryon and continued by Arthur Jones as Honorary Editors, has recently shown good financial results, but it has also brought its trail of problems. With a few titles in stock (notably PHILLIPS' *Primer of Classification*; HEWITT'S *Summary of P.L. Law*; two Sayers pamphlets, etc.) the Martins tackled the distribution, etc., in addition to the Correspondence Courses, but with the publication of a new edition of *Sequels* they welcomed the time when a Publications Officer was appointed. Storage was a problem and we were grateful for the free use of a room in the premises of the Modern Book Co., in Praed Street, until Frank Cole found that distributing about a dozen titles was more than one person could cope with.

We are now fortunate in having the hospitality of the Newcastle Public Library, supported by a team of the library staff, but they find difficulty in coping with the volume of work in their spare time.

This arrangement which has proved very satisfactory for the Association, cannot go on indefinitely, and we are now considering renting premises for publications stock and standard correspondence courses.

An easy way out for a Council lacking in determination and courage would be to ask the L.A. to take over both the Correspondence Courses and the Publications—that might even be the wisest way out of the difficulties, but it would undoubtedly mean an increase in costs of the courses, and also in distribution costs. This would also mean that the A.A.L. would be one step closer to dissolution.

The present situation reveals only too well that the A.A.L. is large enough and strong enough to flourish as an independent body, and the present state of the L.A. shows that it is capable of a separate existence with a considerable reduction in membership. This might also mean a smaller council composed of equal numbers of authority members and Fellows. An organisation in which the authority members took greater part could probably make greater strides in co-operation than are at present possible through the efforts of *enthusiastic* Chief Librarians on their own.

There is surely more that the L.A. could do on the lines of the Joint Standing Committee of the Metropolitan Boroughs—co-operation, standardisation, subject specialisation, and more particularly a subject which has been under discussion by the L.A. Council quite recently, library legislation. New legislation would have more support if the authority members were fired with the enthusiasm of the librarians, and perhaps if there was more co-operation with the Authority organisations. More active authority members could with L.A. members formulate

national policy for libraries.

How many authority members attend Branch Meetings? We cannot expect them to listen to discussions and papers by assistants, but why should not branch meetings be attended by authority members and chiefs and Fellows, so that they could discuss things like co-operative purchase of books, organisation and methods investigations, library research, subject specialisation, co-operative cataloguing, complete mobilisation of area resources, co-operation with government and special libraries, public relations and library policy generally.

I would liken this to normal library committee work, in which the Library Committee decides broad lines of policy and leaves the Chief Librarian to carry it out. After the Chief Librarians and their authority members had hammered out policy, the A.A.L. at their meetings could well discuss how the various policies affected their work and how they might best be carried out.

If the Library Association would decide what is its business and then mind its own business and leave the A.A.L. to continue doing the work it has done (I venture to claim it has done very well, ever since its formation 60 years ago, there would be no declarations of our redundancy.

HOMO SAPIENS ?

Dr. Savage thinks the Association of Assistant Librarians is *functus officio*; we think so, too . . .

Editorial, *The Library World*, January, 1951.

The A.A.L. has acted as an energizing, educative and vigilant force of tremendous value and we hope will long continue its beneficent career.

Editorial, *The Library World*, March, 1955.

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CHANGE OF HON. EDUCATION SECRETARY

As from June 1st, 1955, Mr. J. S. Davey, F.L.A., has been appointed as Hon. Education Secretary of the A.A.L. All enquiries regarding correspondence courses should now be addressed to him at 49, Halstead Gardens, London, N.21.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE FUTURE OF THE A.A.L.

The symposium on the future of the A.A.L. reminds me of the insecure child: "Mummy, what is to become of me?" "Mummy, am I really loved and wanted?" "Oh mummy, mummy why is everybody so nasty to me?" The simplest solution for a child's unhappiness is to chop off his head—a wasteful and messy procedure that might easily result in the execution of the executioner. An alternative solution is, presumably, to encourage the child to forget his fears and to give him such a background of trust and security that he will be able to lead a useful, happy and well-integrated existence. Children are, after all, the products of their parents and it ill becomes their parents to abuse them even if, as in this particular case, the union was effected at the point of a C.U.K.T. shotgun.

E. A. CLOUGH,

Deputy City Librarian, Bristol.

The main purpose of the A.A.L. is undoubtedly the welfare of the assistant. Are conditions in all libraries so perfect that there is no further need for improvement? Our own excellent Tighe report was bungled by the Library Association negotiations with NALGO to such an extent that no part of the report has been included in the "Blue Book."

For some subtle reason, Mr. Hutchings wishes us to hand over to the Library Association. First of all, we should have to be convinced of the desirability and necessity of such a transfer—neither of which is appar-

ent. Secondly, we should have to have every confidence in the ability of the parent body to perform the functions required of it. Chief librarians themselves have displayed the greatest lack of faith in the ability of the Library Association to act on their behalf. They have even formed their own separate society for the negotiation of salaries. If the L.A. is powerless to negotiate for chief officers, how much more useful can it be to the humble assistant?

G. WHEATLEY,

Deputy Librarian, Dartford P.L.

Mr. Pocklington would like to know why thousands of members of the A.A.L. couldn't care less about its future. Perhaps he would be interested in my views on the subject. I am a library assistant of some ten years' standing, and I am still in the throes of passing two remaining examinations to qualify as a Chartered Librarian. My duties in the branch library in which I work are such that I spend the majority of my time at the counter serving by day housewives and during the evening children and tired industrial workers. Ninety per cent of these people want reading matter with which they can relax, and whether I've passed any examinations at all has little or no bearing on the enquiries I can satisfy. All the qualifications I need to fulfill my duties are a good memory, physical well-being and a sense of humour.

The salary I receive is the same anyone with no library experience or examinations, but the same age as myself, would receive; and the shortage

of staff is such that people of this nature would not be discouraged. I am off duty two nights each week at 5 p.m., and one whole day, during which time I study for my forthcoming examinations and indulge in normal social activities.

What inducement does the A.A.L. offer to me to care about it at present, let alone in the future? Many of its meetings are held at times I cannot attend, about subjects which have no appeal. I pay an annual subscription to the Library Association which I heartily begrudge and from which I receive no visible benefit, and I sign automatically that I wish to belong to the A.A.L. My younger colleagues do the same, and it appears to mean even less to them than it does to me.

I am apathetic about organized leisure hours, but I am interested in my job, even though the above may seem to contradict this. I have visited many public libraries when off duty, and have gained considerable knowledge of administration and organization, a subject which interests me. I have also attended two annual conferences of the Library Association, and intend visiting a third this year.

To sum up, Mr. Pocklington, what bearing has the A.A.L. on my *present* position and my *future*? The chief concern of all library assistants, if they will but admit it, is the manoeuvres of NALGO to better their working conditions—and, in a half-hearted fashion, the passing of exams. by a few who see this as the only way they can move from one authority to another and better themselves financially.

JOSEPHINE I. SALOND,
Assistant, Birmingham P.L.

Having read Mr. Pocklington's contribution to the *April Assistant*, I asked a junior whether she would mind if the A.A.L. ceased to exist, and was rather disconcerted to receive in reply an emphatic "Yes." In fact, she seemed quite startled to think that there was any possibility of such an event occurring.

My faith in teen-age assistants

somewhat restored, I started thinking about the age problem. The term *Assistant Librarian* can and does cover all ages from 16 to 60, and all posts from that of the newest junior to that of Deputy. To keep such a widely differing body fully satisfied and fully represented on Council, it would appear necessary for it to be split up into numerous sub-divisions. Thus one might have a section for juniors under 20, Chief Assistants under 35, Deputies under 50—the possibilities are endless, and would provide the classification student with good practice. The point is that the A.A.L. does cover a very wide field at present, and cannot be blamed too much if its Council errs towards the higher age group. Drastic reduction in the age and status of members would bring equal outcry from the other end of the scale.

If the Association is to be purely for junior assistants, then make it so. Kick out all the Deputies, Chief Assistants, and other lofty beings, and make them have more say in the L.A.—at present, L.A. Branch meetings all too frequently develop into a gathering of the Chiefs. Merely to swing one end of a see-saw up instead of the other does not seem a very satisfactory solution to the problem. In any case, self-criticism is surely a healthy sign and not the action of a decaying body. And maybe "young Fred" and "little Kate" care more than you think—have you tried asking them?

B. J. COLLINS,
Branch Librarian, Portsmouth P.L.

THE NEW YORK LIBRARY CLUB

The New York Library Club, composed of public, college, university, school, and special librarians in the Greater New York area, sends greetings to confreres in other countries. The Club realizes a unique opportunity in its location at a port of entry of the United States and at the seat of the United Nations, and hopes that librarians planning to visit the area will make themselves known.

The Hospitality Committee of the

New York Library Club will make it possible to plan a profitable use of time for librarians when in New York and will be helpful in making arrangements for visiting librarians, archivists, documentalists, and bibliographers to meet their colleagues.

On behalf of the Hospitality Committee, I will greatly appreciate your co-operation in notifying me of the approximate dates when any librarians from your country will be visiting New York City. In turn, the Club will be happy to inform your local library association should New York librarians visit your shores during the coming months.

LEE ASH,

*Chairman, Hospitality Committee,
New York Library Club.*

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International Peace
United Nations Plaza at 46th St.
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"SELLING THE LIBRARY SERVICE"

Although in accord with many of the findings of the A.A.L. Conference, particularly resolution number 8, I must disagree with the section on Display. I suggest that displays result in a great deal of wasted effort, particularly when compared with essential tasks which are not carried out. By essential tasks I mean the adequate selection and revision of stock and a proper exploitation of stock by the provision of a "Readers' Librarian."

I consider the suggestion that display should receive greater attention in our professional education as reactionary and out of place.

L. S. FRANCIS,

Student, N.W. Polytechnic.

In connection with Resolution 8 "That the Library Association should be asked to consider appointing a professional Public Relations Officer . . .", the following sentence taken from the *Actes de Conseil de la FIAB*, 20th

session, Zagreb 1954, p. 190, may be of interest:—

"At Sundbyberg, a satellite town to Stockholm, a special state grant has been given for the temporary appointment of a public relations officer, a librarian who works with the community at large in order to interest people in books and reading."

More details appeared in *Bogens Verden*, May, 1954.

H. A. WHATLEY,
Scottish School of Librarianship.

PRIMER OF WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Reading the 59th Annual Report of the A.A.L., I was amazed at the following statement:—

"Plans for a Primer of Work with Young People have had to be abandoned for the time being because of the difficulty of finding a suitable author."

Are we to assume that there is no children's librarian in the British Isles to-day possessing the requisite qualifications for authorship of such a primer—or that the children's librarians who might be capable are so rare that the search for them involves a mighty task?

I am just about to consign this report to the waste-paper basket before any of the fifty qualified children's librarians who are at present my colleagues in the Boys' and Girls' Division of the Toronto Public Libraries see it and assume that the state of work with children in England is akin to that of Denmark in Hamlet's day!

CHRISTINA DUFF STEWART,

*Interne, Boys' and Girls' Division,
Toronto P.L.*

[The A.A.L. is still eager to publish such a work, provided that the high standard of its previous primers can be maintained. The Hon. Editor (Secretary of the Press and Publications Committee) will be interested to hear from any children's librarian who feels impelled to respond to Miss Stewart's challenge.—Hon. Ed.]

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Mr. Hartley's letter in the May issue prompts me to write of the English Literature course I took by correspondence last year.

I had no trouble about the timing of the lessons. Indeed, my tutor was most accommodating in this matter, and mutual arrangements were made which covered both my tutor's holidays and my own.

The lesson notes themselves, however, made a very poor showing against the notes of a correspondence college such as Wolsey Hall. The information given about each author was not of much help, while any appraisal of an author's work given was invariably in ejaculatory words or phrases, lifted from one of the histories of English literature. Admittedly, the notes were intended as pointers to the student's reading, but they were very poor guides. How helpful it would have been, for example, if authors' dates had been given, together with the dates of publication of their principal works.

Actual mistakes were not absent. For example, a knighthood was conferred on William Wycherley; Wordsworth was made Poet-Laureate before Southey; while Andrew Young was accused of (or credited with?) writing "The Night Thoughts." These are three gross errors which I remember; a student retailing these "facts" in an examination would be severely penalised. These mistakes cannot be ascribed to "typist's errors." Nor were "amendments and addition sheets . . ." sent for this course.

It would seem that there is a case for insistence upon greater accuracy and care in compiling and editing these courses.

L. BULMER.

Senior Assistant, Huddersfield P.L.

JUNIOR ASSISTANTS

Now that Mr. Banks has left the Brentford and Chiswick staff for higher regions, I can perhaps answer his letter in the May issue without incur-

ring the charge of attempting to stifle the views of my own staff.

To some extent I agree with his criticisms of Miss Wilden-Hart's nomenclature, but she has a point with her distinction between mature and immature sub-professionals. The line is not an easy one to draw, but Mr. Banks will remember from his bibliography studies that there are ways of reproducing these awkward illustrations with shades of grey as well as the nice firm black and white lines. I would point out that before he finally qualified he was himself considered by the senior staff as a "mature" sub-professional, though such grades were not designated in our less organised library society.

May I also say a word in reply to Mr. Foskett. Since transferring his allegiance from the ratepayer to the metal box, he has been growing an enormous chip on one shoulder about public libraries, and now takes every opportunity it seems of denigrating public librarians and dismissing them as all rather worthless.

Now, since his admirable achievements in academic fields, the other shoulder seems to be similarly decorated—this time with a positive chip in favour of graduates. Is Mr. Foskett trying to set himself up as a public relations officer for special librarians in general, and graduates in particular? If so I do not think he will achieve very much by his present methods, except perhaps to widen the rift between public and special librarians and destroy sympathies on both sides.

Of course Miss Wilden-Hart's aside about graduates was pointless—most asides are—but you have to get pretty sensitive to go round picking them up and magnifying them until they are grossly out of proportion. And Mr. Foskett, judging from his recent petty note in the *L.A. Record* about public librarians, seems not to be the person to do it.

E. E. MOON,

Deputy Librarian, Brentford and Chiswick P.L.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE NOVEL PROBLEM

(With apologies to Paul Jennings).

Many of our worthy public librarians are reluctant to admit any restriction
On the provision of fiction.

They are, I am happy to say, zealous to defend my privilege,

As a common man, to choose to read privilege,

And, moreover, to have it supplied at public expense.

This is an attitude that reveals sound common sense:

A courageous, realistic, let-us-face-facts sort of attitude,

Which avoids that pious platitude

About the right book, the right reader, and the right time,

And instead approves of good, saleable stuff about oppression, lust, and crime.

Stuff that will not be out of place in vans on village greens,

And similar bibliothecal scenes,

Such as branches in grubby back streets (or grubby branches in back streets, I
do not remember which),

Where public librarians, I am told, find their occupational niche.

There are those who say it would be something of a mile-stein,

If public libraries began to provide such works as, let us say, Beilstein;

But I cannot, with an easy conscience,

Subscribe to this sort of idealistic nonsense.

I think the advanced stuff should be left to the special librarian

(Who, you remember, is obliged to be erudite and Scaligerian).

He knows how to cope,

And does not have to collect all the doubtful books for councillors, or dispense
other varieties of soft soap.

O worthy public librarians, do not allow yourselves to be turned aside from your
true path by the voices of fanatics,

Or try to dabble in science and technology, or the abstruse realms of mathe-
matics;

You will be much happier with your vari-coloured Clubs,

And will be closer to the common man, who (of course) spends all his time at
football matches or in pubs;

Who, if he has to read, finds it something of an affliction,

And reads only fiction.

ICARIUS.

BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE, 1955

A group at
the final
general session.

Left to right:

W. Tynemouth

(Newcastle),

G. E. Smith

(West Riding),

R. Brown

(Gillingham),

and

L. G. Lovell

(Middlesbrough)

*For full report
see our May
issue.*



FRICION (TOYS) AT A.G.M.

(60TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 4TH MAY, 1955).

FOR 4TH MAY (not July) the Greater London Division organised the kind of programme which is now becoming expected of them—theatre, food and a lively meeting. Thornton Wilder's "The Matchmaker" proved to be a feast of fun, and those who spent 10s. so wisely must have been heartened to hear that "Money's like manure—it ain't no good unless you spread it around."

At Lyons' (free advertisement) our party became entangled on the third floor with an equally large party of martial elderly ladies who bore slight resemblance to A.A.L. members, despite the implication of the motion to come in the evening. Our organisation proved superior and we won through to booked tables for tea and baked beans among other things.

The evening proceedings began with the induction of the President by his predecessor, Mr. J. S. Parsonage. Kind and deserved words were said on both sides, and these perhaps were more sincere and deliberate than a later aside of the President's which dismissed Past-Presidents as *old has-beens*.

The routine A.G.M. business was despatched with machine-gun rapidity. Well-rehearsed proposers and seconders had the minutes taken as read, the annual report and financial statement received, and two Honorary Auditors, Miss Rita Ensing and Mr. Michael Wise, appointed with little waste of time.

This year produced no battery of contentious motions from familiar London members, but the one which did feature on the agenda paper ensured that placid routine would be disturbed for a while. It sought to amend the rules to ensure that three of the National Councillors elected annually would be under thirty years of age. The motion was splendidly put by Mr. Pocklington (Chelmsford), who illustrated the simplicity of his solution with an instructional talk on the principle of friction toys and a demonstration on a window-sill of the Council Chamber with an actual model, presumably by permission of a younger Pocklington. The motion was seconded by Mr. Westacott (Croydon), and if these two young speakers may be taken as representative, the Council will be stronger for its infusion of young blood.

After some discussion, which featured an attack on the motion by the aged Deputy Librarian of Bilston Public Library, and an accusation directed at Mr. Pocklington (from a most unusual quarter) of "starry-eyed romanticism," the situation was quickly and smoothly resolved by the gift for compromise of "Old Father Tyne-mouth," a name bestowed by a younger adversary. His amendment, seconded by Mr. Stockham, seeking to increase the number of National Councillors to nine, three of whom must be under thirty, was almost unanimously supported.

Under *Any Other Business* the President read a letter from Mr. Sharr and a number of other librarians in Western Australia, sending greetings and best wishes on the occasion of the A.A.L.'s Diamond Jubilee. This warm and friendly gesture was received with acclaim by all present and the President promised to convey our pleasure and gratitude.

Members will have an opportunity to read the Presidential Address for themselves in this issue, so it would be irrelevant to pre-judge it here, except to say that the care and industry which went into its preparation were matched by the clarity and good humour of the presentation.

ERIC MOON.

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

(COUNCIL NOTES: MAY 5)

FOR SEVERAL YEARS a special committee has been considering and preparing a revised set of Rules for the Association. After such careful mastication it was hoped that the digestion of the resulting document would be painless, but more than faint rumblings were heard and the Rules provided one of the liveliest debates of the day. The rules governing the election of National Councillors was changed to meet the wishes of the previous day's A.G.M., despite the fears of Mr. Green (Manchester). He was assured by the President that "we have always realised the danger of the Greater London Division."

An attempt was made to reduce the number of members required to call a Special General Meeting from 100 to 50. Mr. Surridge dismissed as "a slur on the membership" the suggestion that 50 members would call such a meeting for frivolous reasons, but the amendment was defeated and the century is still required.

Intense heat was generated by the question of the right of co-opted members of Council to vote. Mr. Surridge, who as Honorary Assistant Secretary, is a co-opted Officer of the Council, defended this with suffragette intensity, revealing that he had been voting illegally all this year. Though neither railings nor chains were in evidence it was clear that he had come prepared for a filibuster, as his neighbour reported that at the beginning of the meeting he had organised cigarettes, acid drops and other equipment as for a siege. When the moment of decision arrived, Mr. Surridge roundly declared: "Whether I have the power to vote or not, I'm voting against it," but his raised hand was watched carefully for the rest of the meeting by Mr. Smith, of Manchester, and as carefully ignored by the platform. The complications arising from the consideration of this item are perhaps best illustrated by the following quotations:

"This difference is too subtle for me" (Mr. McColvin).

"Now that I've caught up with this, I agree with Mr. Jones" (President).

"It's not Local Government, but local government" (Mr. Phillips).

Among matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, the progress of the 1954 A.G.M. suggestion for an Honours Thesis was noted. The Secretary of the L.A. had reported that "the Assessors are not opposed to any project likely to lead to the advance of knowledge in librarianship," and indicated that an essay of appropriate length (30,000 words) and depth might meet these grandiose requirements. The L.A. Council had referred the matter to the L.A./ASLIB Joint Committee which is discussing the long-term revision of the syllabus. Mr. Carver wondered whether we had figures for the depth, and it was suggested by Mr. Tynemouth that it should be measured in fathoms. Mr. Bill was apparently unable to distinguish between tacking something on to the syllabus, and adding something to it, which is perhaps understandable.

One nomination had been received for the office of Honorary Editor, but consideration of this and the office of Honorary Publications Officer was deferred until the September meeting, when it is hoped that further nominations will be forthcoming as a result of the invitation in the May issue of this journal. Two nominations for the office of Honorary Assistant Treasurer were received, and the excitement of a secret ballot (which found the Honorary Secretary short of paper) was followed by the appointment of Mr. H. G. Holloway, of Eastbourne, for the remainder of this year.

Among publications on which progress was reported by Press and Publications Committee was a Primer of Documentary Reproduction. Mr. Mason (E. Midland Division), who purported to be "standing up for himself" (and with his many inches he looks capable of it), thought that such a publication would be rendered superfluous by his own on "non-book materials," but Council stubbornly decided to investigate the possibilities nevertheless. Arising from the A.A.L. Conference suggestion that a Primer of Display Work and Publicity be prepared it was decided that an annotated catalogue should be published in connection with a projected exhibition of display materials, to include a chapter on display work in libraries. If the exhibition does not materialise the matter will come before Press and Publications again. The Hon. Editor reported that he is still considering the "Display of the Month" feature suggested by the Conference.

A further recommendation from the A.A.L. Conference was considered by the Education Committee, and the L.A. are to be asked to consider the possibility of greater emphasis on the subject of display methods in the syllabus. The long-number controversy which continues to baffle classification students reared its head once more, and a most complex motion seeking further clarification of the examiners' policy is to be forwarded to the L.A. A letter from a student on Correspondence Courses stated "At the risk of sounding like a Horlicks advertisement, may I say that I had a bad examinations record until I tried them."

Mr. W. G. Smith reported that the Correspondence Courses Committee had met at dawn. Their recommendation of Mr. Davey (Edmonton) as Honorary Education Secretary to succeed Mrs. Martin was unanimously approved by Council.

The report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee brought confessions of ignorance about finance from Mr. Phillips and Mr. Surridge (Chairman of Finance), and as a result of inaction on a Yorkshire motion an expression of horror from Mr. Tynemouth "at the thought of the Yorkshire Division lying on the table." Arrangements for the hiring and selling of the new film "Resources Discovered," which Mr. Broome had shown to Council before the meeting, were approved, but even the drama of cinema was dwarfed by Council's according to Mrs. Martin the highest honour the Association can give. She is to join the select band of Honorary Fellows, and a suitable presentation will be made, probably at the next A.G.M. Mr. Phillips heralded this as the end of a phase in A.A.L. history.

At this stage the Brighton Library School arrived as guests and observers of the Council (a new departure). One of my co-reporters notes it as "the entry of the gladiators—one man, umpteen girls and Mr. Lockwood." This is perhaps hard on Mr. Lockwood, even by Thomas Clearwater standards.

Plans for the next week-end conference were discussed, a sub-committee set up, and proposals asked for regarding a theme by the end of June. It is hoped that either the Eastern Division will entertain us at Cambridge or the Wessex Division at Southampton. The representatives of these Divisions could fairly be described as cagey about committing their committees, and it is worth quoting Mr. Stebbing on this point—"My committee is a bit funny." A detailed plan for the conference had already been hammered out by Messrs. Surridge and W. G. Smith, perhaps in other precincts, but Mr. Tomlinson felt that "no inner caucus should stampede the Council into a decision."

Library legislation featured yet again on the agenda, but the only

Divisional motion taken up was one from Manchester deploring the secrecy with which the matter is surrounded. The Library Association is to be asked to produce a comprehensive document for consideration by all members.

Five minutes only were needed before the clock face was divided neatly at six o'clock, many had departed and others were leaning back at perilous angles on chairs or slumping slightly on tables.. The result of this general disintegration was that three of the six motions forwarded by the A.A.L. Conference were deferred until the next meeting. The exhibition of material shown at Birmingham is to be repeated for a week at Battersea Library in the summer, the Editor of the Record is to be asked to invite the co-operation of librarians in keeping the files of publicity material in the L.A. Library up to date, and it is hoped that G.L.D. and the London and Home Counties Branch will co-operate in putting on an exhibition of commercial display materials at Chaucer House.

The Council rose at dusk.

ERIC MOON.

STUDENTS' PROBLEMS

edited by O. S. TOMLINSON

THE FOLLOWING is contributed by R. C. Benge:

It has been pointed out to me by Dr. Walford that my answer to Question 7 of the December, 1954, Assistance to Readers' examination [in the Examinations Supplement to the February, 1955 *Assistant Librarian*] contained a number of misprints, some mistakes in emphasis and several downright errors. In order that students should not be misled, I enclose a corrected version with apologies.

The fact that these mistakes were perpetrated by one who is supposed to know about such things suggests that the poor student is facing a formidable task indeed. Mr. Atkinson's *cri de coeur*, "Ein Kleiner Nachtmär" in the March *Assistant Librarian*, emphasises the same point. However, the outlook is not so gloomy as all this might seem to imply. In this question the examiner offered a choice of one out of four foreign national bibliographies. It can be stated with confidence that the candidate will always be offered such a choice since such questions are intended for those who have personal experience or special knowledge of one foreign language national bibliography. This is a much less troublesome problem which any student should be able to solve in spite of the shortcomings of text-books or even tutors!

GERMANY. The publications of East Germany and West Germany are covered as follows:

EAST GERMANY

(Leipzig: Deutsche Bücherei; Börsenverein der deutschen Buchhändler).

1. *Deutsche Nationalbibliographie*, 1946—. Part A (book-trade publications), weekly; Part B (non-book-trade publications), 2 per month. Each with 24 classes; there is a quarterly subject index to each part.
2. *Jahresverzeichnis des deutschen Schrifttums*, 1945—. Annual author list cumulation of the foregoing, Parts A and B, less the dissertations listed in Part B. These lists claim to cover West German publications as well as publications in German elsewhere (e.g., Switzerland; Austria). Subject and catchword index.
3. *Deutsches Bücherverzeichnis*, 1941—. An author list on the five-yearly

plan. The period 1941-50 is, however, being covered as a whole, to be followed by a list for the 1951-55 period. Includes periodicals and maps.

WEST GERMANY

(Frankfurt/Main: Deutsche Bibliothek; Börsenverein deutscher Verleger—und Buchhändlerverbände).

1. *Deutsche Bibliographie Wöchentliches Verzeichnis*, 1953—, weekly. Preceded by the *Bibliographie der deutschen Bibliothek*, 1947—, weekly. Book-trade publications; 26 classes.
2. *Deutsche Bibliographie. Halbjahresverzeichnis*, 1951—. A half-yearly author list, with subject index, which cumulates the weekly list and attempts to cover all publications in German.
3. *Deutsche Bibliographie*, 1945-50. An author list on the five-yearly pattern. Includes maps, but excludes school text-books, music and periodicals.

Of the two series of bibliographies the East German is usually recognised as the fuller.

ITALY. The National Library at Florence receives copies of all Italian publications, by virtue of legal deposit. These are listed in the

Bollettino delle pubblicazioni italiane, 1886—, monthly. 22 classes; includes maps, music and new periodicals.

Giornale della libreria, 1886—, twice monthly, is the corresponding trade list, published by the Associazione italiana degli editori.

Libri e riviste, 1950—, monthly, and *Italia che scrive*, 1918—, monthly, include listings and, in the case of the former, reviews of books and analyses of current numbers of non-scientific and technical periodicals.

SPAIN. The basic current list of books is the

Bibliografía hispánica, 1942—, monthly. Published by the Instituto Nacional del Libro Español; classified by U.D.C.; annual author and title indexes. Complementary to it, in a sense, is the

Bibliotheca hispana, 1943—. The whole is divided into three subject groups, each of which appears quarterly; annual index. Published by the Instituto Nicolás Antonio. Includes foreign material on Spain. Apart from annotated entries for books, this list includes abstracts from some 350 journals. See also Winchell's Guide. *Supplement*, 1950-52, 1A82.

Dr. Walford has also drawn attention to two smaller points in connection with the same paper. He writes: "(a) In dealing with Q.9 of the Assistance to Readers paper, the reviewer has overlooked the claims of the *Bulletin Analytique* (Paris, 1940—weekly), which indexes some 5,000 scientific and technical journals, with indicative abstracts, and of *IBZ*. I agree that these are not at Registration level, but it is misleading to say (p.xvi, line 7) that the *Industrial Arts Index* is the most comprehensive, without adding some qualification. (b) Lists of chemical periodicals. It is so very easy to misspell the compilers of *Periodica Chimica* (p.xvi, line 15) that I advise quoting the title, with the note that it lists periodicals abstracted by *Chemisches Zentralblatt* and is therefore complementary to the *Chemical Abstracts* list."

We are indebted to Dr. Walford for his vigilance in these tricky matters, and also to Mr. Henrik Jones, the Librarian and Information Officer of the Library Association, who points out two small items in Q.12 (p.xvi) which should be corrected. It is stated, he says, that volume i, part (b) of Sadleir's *19th Century Fiction* deals only with twenty-six 19th century authors, whereas in fact it deals with many more than that

number, although comparative scarcities and full descriptions of twenty-six are included. He also draws attention to the fact that Wing's *Short Title Catalogue* is not in two volumes, as stated, but in three, the work having been completed in 1951.

MORE ABOUT OUR LIBRARY SCHOOLS

WE ARE GRATEFUL for Mr. Paton's reply to our article, for it gives us the opportunity to make clearer what apparently we have not made clear enough.

Our article was written in the belief that, after 8 or 9 years' working experience of the library schools, certain salient problems have arisen. Mr. Paton equates our "serious problems" with "trouble" and "crisis looms ahead," and attempts to show that if all is not for the best in the library schools, it is certainly not far short of it. Troubles and crises sometimes occur when problems are either ignored or remain unsolved. We re-state what we consider to be these salient problems:

(i) We believe that Mr. Stokes's wish that staff of the library schools should be able to resume practising librarianship is well-founded, and regret that it has not happened on any significant scale. There is a direct connection between practice and teaching and we think it cannot be maintained effectively if the staff of the schools remain largely static until they retire. The difficulty is not of librarians' making, and the solution is not in our hands. Local authorities seeking to fill senior posts, and for reasons best known to themselves, apparently do not regard experience in administration of library schools and the professional and intellectual abilities such work engenders as satisfactory substitutes for practical library experience.

(ii) We do not underestimate the value of the work done by the schools. But we regret the apparent inability of the schools to enrich with original work the field of professional studies. Here we are probably in agreement with Mr. Paton, although his solution is that there should be fewer and larger schools. We have already indicated that we think this may be a correct step. But the abolition of some library schools, providing new locations for others and the consequent reshuffling and possible redundancy of some lecturers, seems to us no small matter. It is a "serious problem," and Mr. Paton in drawing our attention to it can hardly accuse us of fabricating problems or exaggerating their importance. Will he seek to prove that this is, on the contrary, a small matter of policy and administration or alternatively that it is so pregnant with the seeds of crisis that he must deny paternity?

(iii) The lack of opportunity for full-time lecturers to test their teaching and outlook by practice must, we are certain, be a nagging doubt for many of them. How to give new insight to students in such matters as book selection, library planning, relations with local government departments, catalogue construction, production of printed matter or readers' advisory services without recent practical experience against which to measure a critical and evaluative approach, seems to us no small problem. Are we again guilty of fabrication, or is it because Mr. Paton sees no solution that he is so strangely silent about this matter?

We have other bones to pick with Mr. Paton, but they may be classed as plain misrepresentations or fancy embroidery. Examples are:

(i) Mr. Paton says that "it is a gross exaggeration that 'a great deal of the teaching at full-time schools . . . is done by visiting lecturers.'" Those dots of his conceal our "and almost all the teaching at their part-time appendages and at the innumerable technical colleges throughout the country." We hope we are forgiven this mention of the question of part-time classes in an article on library schools. As to number of visiting lecturers, see *Students' Handbook*, 1955.

(ii) We agree that it "is indeed a naive assumption that because a man is a successful Chief Librarian, he is therefore a good teacher." We say in our article "that experience and eminence are not the only qualities demanded of a lecturer," but infer that they are desirable. Who is assuming what, Mr. Paton?

(iii) We regret that we did not make clear enough that by examiners we meant those who bear full responsibility for the setting of papers—the Senior Examiners, the Subject Assessors and the Senior Assessors. Look again, Mr. Paton, at the list in the *Students' Handbook* and perhaps you will now agree that there is evidence of greater weight in the Examining Body controlled by our Association than in the largely uncontrolled and uninspected teaching body. Or do H.M.Is. do the work satisfactorily?

THOMAS CLEARWATER.

ROUND THE DIVISIONS—13

SUSSEX DIVISION

THE SOUTH COAST BRANCH of the Library Assistants' Association was formed at a meeting at Brighton Public Library on the 29th May, 1912. The *Brighton Herald* gave a very full account of the proceedings and we learn that Mr. Berwick Sayers, President of the L.A.A., was there and "gave some helpful counsel in matters of detail."

The Branch (later to be known as Division) included all the libraries from Hastings to Southampton—a distance of almost 100 miles. The membership in the first year was 33 and by the end of the Great War had risen to 44. Although membership increased steadily in the years following, interest in Divisional activities waned. This was felt to be due to the unwieldy size of the Division and accordingly, in 1924, it was agreed to divide into two Sections, East and West. This arrangement did not work out very happily, so in 1927 a ballot was taken of the membership of 78, and by an overwhelming majority it was decided to split into two quite separate Divisions, to be called South Eastern and Wessex respectively. The two Divi-

sions have always maintained the most cordial relations and it has long been the practice to hold an annual Joint Meeting, in each Division alternately.

[We are indebted for the historical details given above, to Miss Grace Dean, of Worthing Public Library, who retired from the position of Divisional Secretary at the end of 1948, after 25 years' service.]

The new South Eastern divisional area coincided exactly with the County of Sussex, which is why the name of the Division was changed to Sussex last year. The South East is usually taken to include Kent, which, of course has its own Division. Sussex has nine municipal and two county libraries, but a dearth of special and university libraries. Membership at present is 124 and attendance at last year's meetings varied from 27 to 72. (In fairness it should be added that the latter included a number of students from the Brighton School of Librarianship!)

Sussex is 70 miles from east to west, with Brighton at the half-way mark. Brighton or Hove is therefore the natural choice for the Annual

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General Meeting, while other meetings are distributed as fairly as possible. Including the A.G.M., five meetings are held in the year, a typical programme has three meetings at which papers are read, the fourth is a quiz, mock library committee, etc., and the fifth a tour of the Monotype Works, British Museum, etc.

Sussex often acts as host to both the L.A. Annual Conference and the London and Home Counties Branch Weekend Conference, so members are able to meet the "big guns" of the profession. Apart from the Conference, however, it is very rare that meetings of the Branch are held outside London, so to a certain extent the Division has to fulfil functions normally performed by a Branch.

The Brighton School of Librarianship has already been mentioned. In co-operation with the Division, the School holds part-time classes for the Entrance and Registration Examinations. In the past the Division has held week-end schools and last year a One-day School in Bibliography was

held in the Royal Pavilion, Brighton. This entailed a minimum of expense to members and over one-third took advantage of the opportunity to attend. The latest venture in the field of education in librarianship is the publication of a union list of textbooks in the libraries of the Division. This 48-page booklet, priced at 9d., is interleaved and will be kept up-to-date by six-monthly supplements published in the Divisional News Letter.

The News Letter was launched in 1949 by the then Divisional Secretary, Mr. R. Rowsell, and is issued about seven times a year. It has proved invaluable in keeping the members posted on Divisional and national activities.

The Sussex Division has always been lucky in the co-operation it has received from all the Chief Librarians in the area and in the hospitality so kindly given by the various Library Authorities. It is a small Division, but a very keen and friendly one.

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